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DEPT FOR WHA/AND, USOAS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [OAS](#) [PE](#)
SUBJECT: OAS MONITORING DOCUMENTS A FREE AND FAIR SECOND
ROUND ELECTION, BUT WITH SOME NEED FOR FINE TUNING

REF: LIMA 1549

Sensitive But Unclassified, Please Handle Accordingly

See Action Request Paragraph Nine

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. As was the case in April, Lloyd Axworthy provided energetic and skillful leadership to the OAS monitoring mission in Peru. In a private meeting on 6/6, Axworthy told the Ambassador that his final report, although generally positive, would highlight the need for better GOP interagency coordination, better accommodation of rural voters, and more effective campaign finance law enforcement. He said he would call upon the OAS General Assembly to address the Venezuelan intervention issue. Our Embassy observers were impressed with the free and fair climate in which the elections took place. There are still some lingering concerns about the internal organization of the OAS monitoring effort. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) As in the first round, Former Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy was an exemplary leader of the OAS mission. He thoroughly reviewed the preparations by Peruvian electoral authorities for conducting the second round; called on the candidates to keep their supporters in check and dispense with violent tactics; traveled to Arequipa and Cusco to urge calm and control in the pre-electoral period; and condemned "declarations regarding (Peru's) electoral process coming from foreign countries" (read Venezuela) as being totally contrary to OAS norms.

¶3. (U) Prior to his press appearance on 6/6, Axworthy invited the Ambassador to a private briefing for a preview of what he would be highlighting in public statements and his report to the Permanent Council. He opened by thanking our Embassy for turning out so many enthusiastic monitors, expressing particular appreciation for our coverage of the provinces.

¶4. (SBU) Axworthy said that his written report would be submitted to the Permanent Council in 2-3 weeks. He said his findings would validate the institutional improvements that have occurred in Peru's electoral oversight institutions in the past five years. Problem areas that would be highlighted are the need:

--for better coordination between the two oversight bodies (JNE and ONPE);

--to better accommodate rural voters. (That would require, Axworthy said, moving away from a one-day election at least in remote areas.)

--for a more effective way to enforce campaign financing laws. The OAS may need to strengthen the Unit for Democracy capabilities to help in this area.

¶5. (SBU) Axworthy said he would call upon the OAS General Assembly to address the Venezuelan intervention issue. He would be raising the problem in his report to the Permanent Council also, saying he might get his hand slapped for it. If the OAS is committed to the principals of the Democratic Charter, he said, it must be committed to dealing with this issue also. One of the OAS professional staff interjected that Peru's regional/municipal elections in November will effectively become the third round of national elections. Chavez will almost certainly pump money into them as well, and of course the same problem is occurring in Nicaragua and Mexico. The problem will be even worse in regional/mayoral races because there is no second round and a one vote advantage will give a candidate the post.

¶6. (U) At the Embassy level, our group of volunteers for the OAS monitoring mission was not as large as last time (33 people vs. 40 for the first round). Nevertheless, we were able to deploy an important contingent of 14 individuals to sites outside of Lima, employing both State and AID funding.

¶7. (U) The Embassy observers agreed unanimously that the elections took place in a free and fair climate, without signs of undue interference. Minor irregularities were noted in some locations -- for example, party representatives attempting to display information or symbols supporting their candidates. In the instances our representatives observed, these situations were resolved quickly and efficiently by electoral officials.

¶8. (SBU) Although the OAS observation mission was on the whole better administered this time, Embassy monitors still had some concerns about the organization of the OAS effort. In one northern department, the OAS coordinator had not

researched or mapped out the location of polling places the volunteers were expected to visit, resulting in wasted time because of an inefficient route of visits to election sites. In Lima, our volunteers also felt that the routing of observers was put together in an unsatisfactory, improvised fashion, and that the instructions from the OAS coordinator were unclear with regard to the information that should be conveyed in spot reports in the course of the day.

¶9. (U) Embassy requests that as appropriate, USOAS bring this feedback on the organization of the monitoring mission to the attention of officials in the Secretariat for appropriate follow-up action.

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